



A survivor of civil war translates her experience into a career serving those in need.

Fadumo grew up in Somalia with her mother and five siblings during the Somali Civil War. One day in 1991, 8-year old Fadumo and her younger sister set off to find clean water for their family. While walking, they heard gunfire and ran into an abandoned house to escape it. There, Fadumo heard the whistling of an incoming bomb before it hit. Fadumo lost her sister and sustained injuries to her leg that led to its amputation.

In 1996, her family sought refuge from the war and set out for Kenya on foot. That same year, they gained refugee status and immigrated to Seattle. In Seattle, doctors and care teams treated infections related to Fadumo's amputation. She received a prosthetic leg and regained her ability to walk on her own. The medical staff's compassion and support sparked Fadumo's interest in the healthcare field.

In 2000, Fadumo graduated high school and started classes at a community college. She made the hard decision to leave school to take a job in home care, which provided training and led to a Home Care Aide license. She worked as a caregiver for about 8 years. During this time, she married and had 2 sons.

After the birth of her second son, Fadumo felt motivated to return to school. Fadumo started classes at Seattle Central College. She hoped to start the respiratory therapy program (RT) after finishing her prerequisite classes.

As Fadumo neared completion of her prerequisites, she experienced financial strain. She was concerned she might not be

able to continue her classes. A college advisor told Fadumo about the **Health Workforce for the Future (HWF)** program. In April 2017, Fadumo enrolled in HWF and was accepted into Seattle Central's RT program. Fadumo completed her prerequisites and started the respiratory therapy program.

During the last eight quarters of her RT training, Fadumo became ineligible for Basic Food, Employment and Training (BFET) funding. Financial Aid and the HWF program helped her continue, covering the cost of school tuition and fees along with vouchers for books, transportation, and supplies. The HWF program also assisted with license exam preparation.

Fadumo attributes her drive to complete her degree to her family and her personal journey to regain the use of her leg. Her education and the ability to make a better life for her family are important to Fadumo. She says they are her way of remembering those who passed during the Somali Civil War and to honor the wounded.

Fadumo graduated with her Bachelor's in Respiratory Care in June 2019 and is working as a respiratory therapist. Fadumo plans to continue her education. She hopes to attend the University of Washington one day and earn a Master's in Prosthetics & Orthotics.

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